

# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—Cowper.



ABSENCE OF MIND.

## TOO SOON.

CHAPTER XI.—LOVE WORKS TROUBLE.

DAYS go by, then weeks, months, and years, and through them all we for the most part are planning and looking forward. We seldom realise, while we are young, at any rate, that we are living our life in each of these hours which we often leap over in anticipation, so desirous are we of those ahead which we fancy will be so much fuller of happiness. And

yet to most of us the day, it may be the hour, in which we make our most important step, comes to us unexpectedly, with no warning for the preparation which we should have thought necessary beforehand. And also this same event which has fixed our future often affects others perhaps wholly unknown to us.

That afternoon at Hampton Court, arranged almost in joke in a few laughing words between Mr. Helder and Aunt Sophy, had already caused more than a fortnight's misery to four people.

Mr. Helder had struggled manfully against what he called his infatuation, and had found himself unable to conquer it—utterly unable to shut out the vision of Ursula's dark eyes from his thoughts; and the more he thought over his last visit to Vine Cottage, the more sure he felt that those eyes would never be his; indeed, he was not sure that they did not belong of right to that good-looking cousin who had so monopolised Ursula, and seemingly with her own will, for she had made no effort to free herself or say a word to him.

"There is no need for me to be tormented about it," he had been contrasting himself for the hundredth time with Frank; "how much better suited he is to a girl of eighteen than I could ever be? I can't get over this folly all at once, I feel, but I can keep away from Vine Cottage. Williams will forget all about me again if I keep out of any chance of seeing him; and if he does ask me, I can easily refuse."

Having made this resolution, it did not occur to Michael Helder that anything further was required of him, and he relapsed into the moody silence which had troubled Miss Fraser.

He was too self-absorbed to notice her. She had grown pale and gloomy. She was jealous, and she knew it; not jealous, perhaps, in the ordinary sense, but jealous that any one should share the confidence and trust her cousin had reposed so implicitly in her.

She did not yield to this feeling; it was the struggle that made her gloomy. A nature like Rachel Fraser's struggles with such will to conquer, that meantime it centres all thought on the offending self. She told herself severely that she was wronging Michael; was it not possible for a man of his age to visit where there was a pretty lively girl without wanting to marry her? But the doubt was very hard to get rid of in the face of Michael's grave, altered look and manner.

Meanwhile the servants talked down-stairs. Had master and Miss Fraser quarrelled?—and yet no one could observe the slightest token of ill-will between the silent pair. Only one evening at dinner, Miss Fraser said, "Have you seen your friends at Brompton lately?"

"No, I have not." And Mr. Helder spoke in so loud and decided a tone that the parlour-maid affirmed to the cook she nearly let the dish fall that she was handing round. "To be sure master spoke quite friendly to Miss Fraser soon after, but that NO was surprising."

All this time Frank was getting rid of his annoyance more easily. He fumed and fidgeted and worried at first, and thought he would go down and see Ursula and make it up, and then it occurred to him that that would be undignified, as she was the offender, and he knew she liked men to be dignified. Then he decided to write, and he did write one or two letters, but these were not satisfactory. Finally, he waited to see how matters would settle themselves, and he took vigorously to rowing, which did his spirits much good and made him brown and hearty-looking.

But Ursula could get no respite from her suffering. She was paler than ever, and besides that she grew thin and hollow-eyed. Once she persuaded Aunt Sophy to call on a friend in Bloomsbury, and when she got there she felt only anxious to come away again, lest they should meet Mr. Helder and he should recognise them. If she could only have decided what to think, life would not have been so full of torment; but one half-hour she was convinced that

Mr. Helder had never cared for her, and that he was quite indifferent about seeing her again, and the next she was heartbroken at the remembrance of her own conduct towards him. She was suffering all the tortures of love without any of its compensating joy, for every pleasant memory she recalled was poisoned by the belief that it was, like that first meeting at the Museum, the work of her own imagination.

"I know it all happened," she said, passionately; "I am not quite so foolish as that; but my vanity deceived me—I misread it all. Is it likely that such a man, a giant in intellect compared with other men I have seen, should think in any special way of such a girl as I am, so unattractive and insignificant, and so ignorant and uncontrolled?" And while Ursula said this to herself, she really believed in her own humility, and felt good and gentle till her will was ever so slightly thwarted.

But her sorrow was no imagination; it began to tell steadily upon her health. Gradually she grew weak and languid; she could not eat, and her sleep was broken by constant and tormenting dreams. She knew by the irresistible instinct so mysterious in its truth, against the magic force of which a woman struggles in vain, that Mr. Helder's image was fixed in her heart. She might never see him again. She might hear of his marriage—ah! the agony of this thought was terrible.

"And that would make no difference," she said, in her wild despair; "I should think of him just as much. I don't suppose I love him. Love!"—she hid her eyes in her hands—"no! I could not love a man who does not care for me; at least, I suppose it is disgraceful to do it. Why are such things sent. I was happy enough—well, not exactly happy—but I went on quietly. I did not know life could be any better, I only suspected it; and if I had never seen him, never listened to his talk—no, it wasn't his talk—what was it? I don't know now what it is I care for. Well, I dare say Frank would gradually have hammered me into the belief that it was all romance, and that life is the detestable, prosy, commonplace thing he thinks it."

These were some of the thoughts that distracted Ursula while she sat poring over a book, her quiet aunt thought—a book of which she never turned a page. No wonder the poor child was inattentive and answered at random. She gave up watching at the window for the feeble chance that Mr. Helder might have other Brompton friends, and so pass along the road. She feared to attract Aunt Sophy's attention. If she had not, in spite of herself, behaved so strangely to Mr. Helder, and if he had come again to Vine Cottage, Ursula would not have been so troubled about her feelings. She was so ashamed of them that sometimes in her saddest moments she forced herself to joke and laugh with her aunt, for the inquiring tenderness of Miss Ashton's looks frightened her. You must remember that Ursula's girlhood was twenty years ago, and she had not shaken off the old-fashioned terror of those days of giving her love unsought.

The third week began, and Ursula could no longer struggle against the lassitude of mind and body which she had striven to hide. Her petulance even had left her, and when Aunt Sophy advised her to go to bed early, she went without a word.

Aunt Sophy was very sad. This was something more than a perplexity. She did not like to speak to Mr. Williams—he had listened to her fears and had

acted  
resul  
mem  
had  
Ursu  
"leas  
aspe  
Frar  
Aun  
shor  
to h  
of h  
Wal  
was  
her  
migi  
quic  
aged  
that  
poor  
She  
min  
for b  
wha  
of m  
deno  
resol  
migi  
I wo  
cann

THE  
Peop  
sum  
one  
her,  
cold  
enou  
By  
hims  
that  
cided  
"he h  
hims  
So  
thou  
apt  
and  
a fre  
M  
Will  
"you  
were  
M  
seem  
Mich  
ing.  
long  
belie  
Th  
man  
"earl  
man  
want

acted on her suggestions, and this was the apparent result; and her chief counsellor, Frank, the only member of the family of whom she was not afraid, had not been to Vine Cottage since his quarrel with Ursula.

"They did quarrel, I feel sure." The gentle lady leaned her soft cheek on her hand with a meditative aspect. "When I asked Ursula when she expected Frank, she said, 'I neither know nor care.'" Here Aunt Sophy sighed. She never carped at her niece's shortcomings; they were always lovingly attributed to her own want of skill as a guide. "She has none of her mother's gentle ways, perhaps that is why Walter takes so little notice of her. I am afraid she was rude to poor Frank. Ah!"—Miss Ashton took her cheek out of her hand and sat upright—"I might have thought of it sooner if I had been quicker-witted. Poor Ursula! she is sadly mismanaged among us. I have no doubt she was rude, and that is what she is fretting about, for she does fret, poor dear child, though I do not like to tell her of it." She paused here; there was a faint struggle in her mind, something whispered that it would be better for both—safer for Ursula, if she urged the girl to tell what was troubling her; and then the remembrance of many abortive attempts to win her niece's confidence came back in a fluttering crowd, and she resolved that it was best to wait and hope. "But I might write to Frank and ask him to come down. I won't even mention Ursula in the note, and then I cannot do mischief."

#### CHAPTER XII.—NOTHING NEW.

THE weather suddenly became bright and warm. People began to throw off winter wraps and to fancy summer was come, whereas she had only sent out one of her heralds to see if the earth were ready for her, and would, no doubt, after a week or so, turn a cold shoulder on the mortals who had been unwise enough to mistake her harbinger for herself.

But the sunshine cheered Mr. Helder; he thought himself cured, and he laughed and talked so naturally that his cousin Rachel grew happy again, and decided she had taken a false alarm.

"It could not be a serious liking," she said, "if he has forgotten it in three weeks; he looks quite like himself again."

So he did; and he felt bright and happy, and thought no more of Ursula Williams. Love is very apt to try this plan; he retreats, hides out of sight, and then bides his time for a weak moment to make a fresh assault.

Mr. Helder came out of the Museum and met Mr. Williams crossing the entrance hall.

"Why, where have you been, Helder? I thought you would have come to see us. I was afraid you were ill."

Mr. Helder excused himself, "I am sorry to have seemed rude. I have been very busy lately;" but Michael's security was not troubled by this meeting. He had told himself Ursula Williams belonged to her cousin Frank, and he was bound to believe his own assertion.

They walked some way together, and then the elder man said,—

"Come down to-morrow, won't you? I go home earlier on Saturdays. I have a curious Persian manuscript to show you, and several other things I want to consult you about."

Mr. Helder hesitated, but being pressed, consented; and then as he walked home he thought after all he had perhaps been foolish to stay away from Vine Cottage. It was only because he was unused to the society of young girls that Ursula had taken such a hold on his fancy.

"No one is so safe as just after a cure," he said. But when he reached home he did not tell Miss Fraser he was going to Vine Cottage; he had told Mr. Williams he could not stay to dinner, so there was no need to speak of his visit.

The bright warm weather lasted; even Aunt Sophy took her work out into the garden and sat under the shade of the trees.

There was no sociability in Ursula, her aunt said; she would never sit down for a talk; if her aunt worked, she was sure to read or write, or do something which precluded conversation.

On this afternoon Ursula was very restless. She tried music, and in her usual careless fashion left the pianoforte open, with sheets of music lying about; then she went into the garden with a book, a volume of Wordsworth; then it came into her head that she must that very moment compare Wordsworth's "Daisy" with Burns's. She went back to the house, and she was so deeply absorbed in studying these side by side that she took no heed of passing events.

She had seated herself on the Turkey carpet; her Wordsworth—a large heavy volume—lay open on the cushion of a low easy chair, and she held the Burns propped against it; her wide-open sleeve had fallen back from the arm which rested on the chair, and she held her soft chin firmly clasped, as if she were taking it into counsel in the matter. She faced the door, and yet, though she was so absorbed, she knew it opened, and that some one had come into the room, but she could not rouse herself.

"Mr. Helder, miss," Jane repeated.

Ursula crimsoned. In her start of surprise she let Burns fall, and this helped her, for while Mr. Helder picked it up she had time to rise up quietly and push her hair off her face.

She gave a quick glance into the garden; she wanted to escape, and give Mr. Helder up to Aunt Sophy till she had got her thoughts in order. She felt too excited to speak. But the garden seat was empty, Aunt Sophy had come in and had passed through the room while she was wrapt in her books.

Ursula's colour fled away and left her very pale.

"What has been the matter? Are you well?" said Mr. Helder, anxiously, and he kept her hand an instant. He was shocked at her looks; he thought she was sadly changed.

He did not know how earnestly he spoke; but the tone stirred Ursula's heart.

"Oh yes, quite well, thank you." She looked up with a loving, grateful glance, and then her eyes drooped in sudden shame. Actually she had begun to cry.

Mr. Helder did not seem to notice her tears.

In that moment he had wished himself away from Vine Cottage. In that glance he had seen again the wonderful dark depth of expression which he had been fighting to keep out of memory. In one instant he felt his hardly won victory slipping from his grasp, but he strove against the subtle temptation; he looked resolutely away from Ursula, and remembered that only a short time ago in that very room she had not given him a word or a look when her cousin was beside her. "And if he came in now



she would take no more notice of me—all women are like this."

"I hope your cousin is well," he said, gravely, when he and Ursula had both seated themselves.

"I don't know."

He had resolved not to look at her, but there was a peculiar tone in her voice that made his eyes seek her face at once. She was looking at him with a very puzzled expression—a new idea had suddenly sprung into life, but it only added to her confusion.

"Did you think Frank lived here?" She keeps her eyes on his, though his intense gaze troubles her, and brings the colour back to her face.

Mr. Helder sees the blush, and it confirms his jealousy. "No, I only supposed that you saw him often, and that—that"—it is so difficult to shape in words the question he wants answered in words—"that he was a great friend of yours."

"He is my cousin, so of course he is my friend," she says, simply; "but I can't tell you how he is, for he has not been here since the day you came."

She speaks sadly, full of self-reproach for her own conduct; but Michael only hears regret for the absence of her lover. He feels savage. He is no longer afraid of looking at Ursula. He has given himself the pain of coming to Vine Cottage to hear a love-sick girl talk of her lover and regret his absence. It is insupportable; he has quite forgotten how the subject was introduced. Mr. Helder does not quite know what to say, and while he hesitates Aunt Sophy comes in.

"I am so glad to see you. I thought it was our nephew; I expect him presently."

"You expect Frank, aunt?"

Ursula is utterly surprised, and speaks out impetuously. She wants Mr. Helder to understand that she knew nothing of Frank's intended visit. The tone startles him, there is so much vexation in it.

"Yes, my dear." The faint pink tinge on Aunt Sophy's cheeks deepens as she meets Ursula's fixed look of inquiry; "I wrote and asked him to come, it is so very long since he has been here."

Ursula glanced quickly at Mr. Helder, and she starts when she meets his eyes fixed upon her. "I am sorry you asked Frank," she says, carelessly; "he will come when he wants to come."

Mr. Helder must surely understand now that she has no special interest in Frank—he is only her cousin.

What Mr. Helder understands is that Ursula and her cousin have had a lovers' quarrel, and that this kind, sweetly smiling aunt is trying to make it up between them. He hardens himself against the dark eyes, and goes on talking to Aunt Sophy.

"He has been here a quarter of an hour," says Ursula to herself; "he will go away soon, and I think we are less friends than ever, for it is worse to speak and not get right again than to be silent as we were last time." She feels despairing, and yet what can she do? She cannot begin to talk to Mr. Helder when he has turned his back on her.

How pleasantly he is talking to her aunt. She sits listening, and then she feels suddenly giddy, for there is a ring at the bell. Frank, no doubt, and he will take possession of her, and there will be an end—an end to what, she does not say, for she has recognised her father's creaking tread, and he comes in. He is alone. Ursula really feels thankful—a very unusual sentiment, for she is disposed to consider that the events of life go specially contrary to her wishes.

"This is very kind, Helder," and Mr. Williams, who never doubts that his friend's visits are only made to him, drags Michael off to the study to read the Persian manuscript.

"Do you think Mr. Helder has come to dinner?" says Aunt Sophy, with the anxiety of a housekeeper.

"I don't know," and Ursula goes into the garden. She is afraid of a discussion, and is conscious that she has lost all self-control.

Aunt Sophy looks after her. "Poor child," she sighs, "I believe it is true. I am afraid she thinks about Mr. Helder, and he does not care for her, poor child!"

The poor child is schooling herself under the trees—lashing herself with pride and sensitiveness, the two weapons women mostly use against themselves.

"He does not care one bit for me! I see it; I know it." A scarlet spot burns on each cheek, and her eyes glitter with excitement; they are too fevered for tears. "And oh, how vain I was even to imagine he could care whether I liked Frank or not. I half think I will pretend I do like Frank, and then Mr. Helder cannot suspect me of caring for himself." She stopped; presently she sighed, and went on again: "No, that would be so missy, so unsimple; besides, it would be an untruth. If I try hard I can be so cold that he will never suspect what I feel at the sight of him." She shrinks up in a corner of the garden seat, which the drooping boughs of an ash hide from overlooking windows, and hides her face in her hands.

What does she feel? She cannot tell—a sensation that is hardly pleasure, it is too fevered, too full of agitation for any real happiness; a sensation that makes her pulses throb and her head burn, and her hands so deadly cold, and her heart—ah! what frightens Ursula is this new strange feeling, as if her heart would urge her out of all self-restraint.

She does not hear footsteps near her, for Mr. Helder has come across the grass, and it is thick and velvet-like; he does not want to take her by surprise. He has said good-by to Mr. Williams and Miss Ashton, and has come out to bid Ursula good-by too—"a long good-by," he says to himself; why should he come down to Vine Cottage again, only to be vexed?

Jumbo comes scampering after him, his long ears flying out like wings, his tail wagging its utmost. A true spaniel, he wants notice from the new visitor. Seeing Ursula, he runs to her, and springs into her lap. She looks up at this and sees Mr. Helder.

"I am come to say good-by," he says, quietly.

"Good-by." Ursula rises and shakes hands, but she cannot get courage to look at him.

Mr. Helder looks down at her, and the change in her face pains him; out here in the full daylight he again sees how very wan and thin the girl looks.

"I am sure you are not well." He did not mean that tenderness in his voice, but Ursula hears it. She looks up with the wistful, grateful glance that tried him so just now indoors.

"How kind you are," she says, gently; "but indeed I am not ill. I—"

She stops; she was actually going to say she was only unhappy. What is the strange power this man has of drawing out her feelings against her will; she can hardly keep from running away; she cannot help blushing.

Mr. Helder feels his resolution flying away like a

torn kite, and then he thinks of Frank. Why should he make himself unhappy in attempting to comfort this strange changeable girl? It is not his business. Why should he try to win her confidence? He might win it if he tried, for her quivering lips tell him that her agitation is getting beyond control. "Win what? The story of her love for her cousin, and the troubles arising therefrom! Nonsense! I am too old for Quixotism," says Mr. Helder, and he murmurs some indistinct sympathy, raises his hat, and goes back to the house; but cannot help looking over his shoulder before he reaches the gravel-walk.

Ursula is sitting down with both hands clasped over her face.

Mr. Helder does not stay to think this time; he is beside her before he knows what he is doing.

"If you are not ill, you are unhappy. What is it? Tell me. Forgive me, I know I have no right to ask, but still tell me."

Ursula dares not take her hands away, they are a shelter against her terror. She feels no courage against Mr. Helder's pity. "I am never happy."

"Yes, you are. Surely you were happy the first time I saw you; and again, at Hampton Court you were so bright." Then, impelled out of himself, "Why are you so changeable? Is it when you are unhappy that you are cold?"

It seems to Ursula that she could not be accused of coldness unless she had been previously unreserved.

"I don't understand," she says, stiffly, and draws her hands away from her face. "You have seen so little of me that you cannot know what my usual humour is."

Mr. Helder bites his lips. How is he to win this strange child to listen. She seems on the defensive on

all sides, but his love is too headlong to let him hesitate. "You will tell me this, at least." He takes one of the small trembling hands in his, heedless of any overlooking eyes. "Which is your true self, the Ursula of Hampton Court, or the stately young lady who had not a word for me the last time I came here?"

Such a bright look spreads over the sweet intelligent face, that once more that foolish distracting longing comes to him to take her in his arms. But she speaks very quietly:—

"You did not speak to me, so I did not know you cared, and Frank would keep on talking so."

This comes in a petulant burst, a revenge for the stiffness with which she began. He feels her hand is restless, so he lets it go. Michael Helder is not a vain man, and he covets the love he is seeking too ardently to believe it is his own.

"Do you know what I thought?"

She glances up with a half arch, half shy look, that makes her infinitely charming.

"I am not sure, what was it?"

"I thought—perhaps my guess was a true one—that you and your cousin were engaged."

The blood rushes over Ursula's face, and her eyes fill with tears. She does not speak gently, she answers impetuously, without reflecting on her words.

"Then you thought me a flirt. You thought I could be engaged to Frank and care for him, and yet talk to you as I did at Hampton Court—"

She stops abruptly, frightened at herself, but she has no time to realise anything.

His heart gives a leap of delight. "You are a darling," he whispers, and he clasps her hand tightly in his; "and we will never misunderstand one another any more."

## CHALDEAN LEGENDS AND THE DELUGE.

BY B. H. COWPER.

TRADITIONS of a deluge have been preserved by nations most widely separated by time and space. Amid a multiplicity of differences, the substantial agreement of these traditions is so remarkable, that a common origin is generally claimed for most of them. Of some, indeed, it may be true that they relate to local floods of vast proportions, but it is probable that many are distorted editions of the history of the Deluge, of which we have a faithful record in the book of Genesis. It is not at all to be wondered at that on the dispersion of our race from the plains of Shinar the memory of the Flood was carried away, and that it became greatly modified, and often localised in its transmission by the imperfect medium of oral tradition. The subject, however, although very interesting, is one upon which we cannot here enter, and we only mention it because attention has been specially called to it through certain discoveries recently published, and of which we purpose giving a brief account and analysis.

That legends of a deluge were current among the ancient Chaldeans has been long known, although they have only come to us through fragments of Berosus and other very old writers. But now, through the learned industry of Mr. George Smith, of the British Museum, we have been put into possession of a long and detailed version of the Chaldean story. The facts of the case are these. Some years

ago, during excavations on the site of the old royal palace at Nineveh, a great number of the so-called books of the palace library were found. These books, which are merely small tablets of clay, and in a more or less perfect state of preservation, bear inscriptions in the cuneiform character. They are supposed to be 2,500 years old, and are now in the British Museum, where Mr. Smith has followed Sir Henry Rawlinson in endeavours to decipher them. Among them a series of twelve tablets has been detected, avowedly relating to very early times indeed. That they are not in any proper sense historical may be gathered from the fact that one principal personage is assigned to 30,000 years before Christ. The series we have mentioned contains the legend of the Deluge, of which legend there are fragments of three copies, out of which Mr. Smith has made his translation. He supposes these copies were made some 660 years before Christ, which, according to the common reckoning, would fall in the reign of Manasseh. But it is thought that the original compositions must be carried back to the seventeenth century B.C., or two hundred years before Moses wrote the Pentateuch. Let it be observed, however, that this date is only conjectural, and that both it and the translation may require important modifications. At present, therefore, we have only a provisional version and a theoretical date. Of the latter

we need say no more; but of the former we have the authority of Sir Henry Rawlinson in favour of Mr. Smith's skill as a translator. That it is imperfect is admitted; but it is believed that it gives a fair general representation of the original.

Mr. Smith placed his statement and translation before a meeting of the Society for Biblical Archaeology, on December 3rd, 1872, when Sir Henry Rawlinson presided, and many literary celebrities were present. We will now give an abstract of what was read, with extracts from the translation itself. It will not be necessary to repeat the preliminary portion of the matter, because, so far as our readers need to know it, we have already indicated its leading points.

The legend professes to belong to the reign of a monarch whom Mr. Smith calls Izdubar, and who is, or may be, supposed to have lived soon after the Deluge. The series to which it belongs contains mythical and fabulous stories of Izdubar's exploits. It tells, for example, how he conquered the city of Erech, at which time the gods and spirits who inhabited the place turned themselves into various animals to escape his fury. The cities of Babel, Surippak, and Nipur, or Calneh, are also mentioned as well as Erech. When Izdubar had overcome Belesu, he received an offer of marriage from Ishtar, or Venus; but after defeating the winged bull, he began to be afraid of death, and to desire to avoid it. He therefore set out to seek and consult Sisit, the Sisuthrus of the Greeks, who had acquired immortality without dying. Mention is made of a prayer to a god named Sin, from whom an answer was received in a dream. After much wandering, Izdubar meets with a seaman, with whom he sails to the mouth of the Euphrates. On their journey the mariner speaks of the waters of death. At length Sisit is seen with his wife across the waters which divide the mortal from the immortal. Izdubar calls to Sisit, whose answer is not all preserved, but it relates to the universality of death. It is in answer to the question how he became immortal that Sisit rehearses the story of the Deluge, from which it will be seen that he is in some respects a counterpart of Noah. He subsequently speaks of his piety and of his translation.

This story seems to have been in a metrical form, and is imperfect. The gods, it appears, revealed their will to Sisit in a great tempest. They bade him make a great ship, because sinners and life were to be destroyed, and he was to take into his ship the seed of all life to preserve them. The measure of the ship in length, breadth, and height was given in cubits, and the ship when made was to be launched. The actual description of the vessel is lost. When launched, the ship, or ark, was rendered watertight by means of bitumen. An altar was erected, a pilot is mentioned, and reeds are said to have been spread above and below. Sisit then took into his vessel all his wealth, with his male and female servants, the beasts of the field, etc. Then follows: "A flood Shamas made; and he spake, saying in the night, 'I will cause it to rain from heaven heavily; enter to the midst of the ship and shut thy door.' A flood he raised, and he spake, saying in the night, 'I will cause it to rain from heaven heavily.' In the day that I celebrated his festival, the day which he had appointed, fear I had; I entered to the midst of the ship and shut my door. To guide the ship to Buzursadirabi, the pilot, the

palace I gave to his hand. The raging of a storm in the morning arose, from the horizon of heaven extending and wide. Vul in the midst of it thundered, and Nebo and Saru went in front; the throne-bearers went over mountains and plains; the destroyer Nergal overturned; Ninip went in front and cast down; the spirits carried destruction; in their glory they swept the earth; of Vul the flood reached to heaven; the bright earth to a waste was turned; the surface of the earth like . . . it swept; it destroyed all life from the face of the earth; . . . the strong tempest over the people reached to heaven; brother saw not his brother; it did not spare the people."

The very gods in heaven were afraid, and sought refuge, and were in great commotion. After describing this, Sisit says: "Six days and nights passed; the wind, tempest, and storm overwhelmed; on the seventh day in its course was calmed the storm, and all the tempest, which had destroyed like an earthquake, quieted. The sea he caused to dry, and the wind and tempest ended. I was carried through the sea. The door of evil, and the whole of mankind who turned to sin, like reeds their corpses floated." Sisit then opened the window, but remained in the ark, which floated over the land to the country of Nizir, where it was stopped by the mountains for six days. On the seventh day a dove was sent out, but not finding a resting-place, returned. Then a swallow was sent out, but it also returned. Next a raven was sent out, and it stayed to feed upon the floating corpses, and did not return.

After this, Sisit says: "I sent the animals forth to the four winds; I poured out a libation; I built an altar on the peak of the mountain, by seven herbs I cut; at the bottom of them I placed reeds, pines, and singar. The gods collected at its burning; the gods collected at its good burning; the gods, like sumbe, over the sacrifice gathered."

At this point there occurs a peculiar change in the tone of the legend, so remarkable that Mr. Smith thinks it indicates the introduction of materials from another source. At the outset the Flood is ascribed to Shamas, which may be the Hebrew Shemesh, the sun, who is associated with other deities, as our extracts show. Here, however, Bel is represented as the causer of the tempest, and as desiring the destruction of every living man. Ninip and Hea remonstrate with Bel, who seems to have been not altogether implacable, for "when his judgment was accomplished," Sisit says, "Bel went up to the midst of the ship; he took my hand and brought me out, me he brought out; he caused me to bring my wife to my side; he purified the country; he established in a covenant, and took the people, in the presence of Sisit and the people. When Sisit, and his wife, and the people, to be like the gods were carried away, then dwelt Sisit at a remote place at the mouth of the rivers; they took me, and in a remote place at the mouth of the rivers they seated me." By all this we understand that Sisit, after the Deluge was, with his wife, translated, without dying, to the region where Izdubar found him. The portions which follow are somewhat obscure, but they contain a sort of conversation between Sisit and his wife, apparently in reference to Izdubar, whose appearance had rather frightened the immortal lady. Some mutilated lines relate to the purification of Izdubar. Afterwards mention is made of some one who was taken to dwell with death. Then Sisit tells the seaman Urhamsi



what to do to cure Izdubar, who seems to have suffered from some disease, but was to be dipped in the sea, when beauty would once more spread over his skin. This done, "Izdubar and Urhamsi rode in the boat; where they placed them there they rode. His wife after this manner said to Sisit afar off, 'Izdubar goes away; he is satisfied; he performs that which thou hast given him, and returns to his country.' And he heard, and after Izdubar he went to the shore." Izdubar and his companion, when Sisit had finished his speech, erect stones as a memorial, and there the legend ends so far as the Deluge is concerned. A note is appended to inform the reader that the tablet from which the above details are taken is the eleventh of the series containing the history of Izdubar, and that it is a copy of the ancient document.

Mr. Smith followed his version of the Chaldean legend by a summary of the Scriptural narrative, and a translation of the fragments from Berosus, who wrote a book on Chaldean affairs, probably as early at least as the time of Alexander the Great. This Berosus records a story similar in important points to the one now recovered from the tablets of Nineveh. Mr. Smith then proceeded to analyse and compare the cuneiform text with those of Berosus and the Bible, showing their resemblances and their differences. As these are interesting, some of them will here be introduced. The names of Noah and of Lamech do not resemble those of Sisit and Ubaratutu his father, as read by Mr. Smith in the Chaldean legend. Sir Henry Rawlinson, however, observed that he very much doubted Mr. Smith's readings of these names, which are, unfortunately, written in a sort of monogram, and, therefore, very difficult to make out. The Scripture history is on the basis of pure monotheism, but in the Chaldean legend nearly all the gods of the early Babylonian pantheon take part in producing the Deluge, and otherwise. We read nothing in Genesis of any dream in which the coming flood was announced; but Berosus alludes to such a dream, and the cuneiform also seems to do so. Both the Bible and the tablets indicate the measure of the ark by cubits, though the numbers are lost in the tablets. Moreover, while the Mosaic record gives fifty cubits as the breadth, and thirty as the height of the ark, the breadth and the height are equal in the cuneiform legend. The Scripture narrative naturally says nothing about launching the vessel, though this appears in the Chaldean. The coating of the ark inside and out with bitumen is mentioned in Genesis as well as in Mr. Smith's documents, though the circumstances are not identical. In both the ark is made the receptacle for animals as well as for a chosen few of the human race, but there are more of the latter with Sisit than with Noah. Both refer the Deluge to the Divine displeasure at sin, and represent it as a supernatural event. The duration of the Flood is very different, however, in these two accounts, that of Sisit being comparatively brief. He says, "Six days and nights passed; the wind, tempest, and storm overwhelmed; on the seventh day in its course was calmed the storm, and all the tempest, which had destroyed like an earthquake, quieted. The sea he caused to dry, and the wind and tempest ended." When the ark touched the mountain of Nizir, it seems to have been detained there only seven days before the dove was sent out. There are no other certain notes of time, but it is not possible to assign as great a duration to this flood as to that of Noah. The latter gives forty days for the

continuance of rain, 150 to the prevalence of the waters, and 123 to their complete abatement, while fifty-seven more must be added to get the date of leaving the ark, or 370 altogether. With regard to the place where the ark rested, there is no such difference. In Genesis it is called the mountains of Ararat, and in the cuneiform legend, the mountain of Nizir. There is little or no doubt that by Ararat the Kurdish mountains are meant, and it is known that Nizir was to the east of Assyria, and part of ranges extending into Armenia. Again, all three accounts agree in saying birds were sent out, though with some difference of detail. Three birds were sent out by Noah; a raven, which did not return, a dove which returned, and a dove which did not return. Berosus says birds were sent out three times; the first came back, the second also came back, but with mud on their feet, and the third did not return at all. The Chaldean cuneiform says three birds went out: first, a dove, which returned; next, a swallow, which also returned; and lastly, a raven, which remained away. The three accounts all refer to a subsequent altar and sacrifice, but with important variations of detail. The Chaldean legends of the ark say that its builder was translated without dying, but the Scripture records this of Enoch, and not of Noah.

Mr. Smith is of opinion that the accounts refer to the same series of events, but were drawn from different sources. The Biblical account is that of an inland people. The inscription is that of a maritime people, and the direction of the Persian Gulf was indicated in connection with this view. The chairman afterwards practically endorsed the opinion, by hinting that the Bible account may have come from the east with the Abrahamic colony in their migration from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran and Palestine. Mr. Smith thinks the Chaldean legend may be made up of two stories of the same occurrence, and he bases upon this opinion an argument for its antiquity. It may be an argument for the antiquity of the traditions on which the legend is built, but it is equally an argument for the more recent compilation of Mr. Smith's document. A comparison of its extraordinary mythological developments with the phenomena presented by the literature of legends and mythology, is, we think, unfavourable to the extreme age mentioned both by Mr. Smith and Sir Henry Rawlinson. The complications of mythology are the growth of time, and this truth is illustrated not only by the examples of India and of Greece, but by others. That the Izdubar legend took its actual form in the direction of the Persian Gulf may be correct, if, as it is said, the tendency of the old traditions of Babylon is to centre in that region. In any case the ark of Sisit was launched there, and near it when he became immortal he was a dweller, and rehearsed to Izdubar his story of the Deluge.

Subsequently to the reading of Mr. Smith's paper, Sir H. Rawlinson made some observations partly bearing upon the chronological question. He said there was a recorded date in the cuneiform inscriptions of B.C. 2280, for the conquest of Babylon by the Medes, and that the number of kings assigned by Berosus to the dynasty which preceded that event would place the commencement of the historical era at about B.C. 5150. Such a statement from so eminent an authority seems, if unqualified, likely to mislead. The dates calculated on the bases of cuneiform inscriptions and lists of kings, may be arithmetically

correct, and historically altogether inaccurate. At all events, in the present state of all our knowledge they cease to be anything more than calculations as soon as they pass a certain limit. However, starting from the above data, Sir H. Rawlinson went on to suggest that Izdubar might have lived about 6400 B.C., and that Sisit's flood was long before that. This carries it into the region of shadows, and there we venture to leave it so far as chronology is concerned.

In a letter to the "Athenæum," Sir Henry Rawlinson states that on reconsideration he has come to the conclusion that the Izdubar legends are a local rendering of the old universal solar myth. The twelve tablets, he supposes, represent the twelve months, and he expects that each tablet will be found to embody a legend specially connected with the month, or zodiacal sign, to which it refers. The legend concerning the Flood he views from this point, and says it belongs to the eleventh month, which was dedicated to the god of rain and tempests, and answers to the sign of Aquarius. Whether this exposition is correct or not, it does two things: it cancels some of Sir Henry's chronological calculations, and it leaves it an open question whether the story of Sisit is a tradition of the Deluge or not.

We see no reason to doubt that it is an old Chaldean legend in substance, and a legend of the Scriptural Deluge. There are too many fragmentary facts in it for it to be an independent creation of human fancy; and it must so far stand or fall with the great mass of like lore to which we referred at the outset. The substratum of truth has had erected upon it a pile of fable; the reality of history has been so incorporated with the fancies of mythology as to be almost lost. As coming from Chaldea it has an interest peculiar to itself, because geographically Chaldea is associated with the Deluge in the Bible. But the Scriptural narrative may also be said to come from Chaldea, and it is easy to see why it retains the original historical form which the other has lost. The Chaldeans fell into idolatry, and appropriated to their many lords, gods, and heroes, not merely the facts of most moment in the annals of the past, but the fictions which they deemed most suitable to their imaginary characters. It has recently been said that the Chaldees, or the Babylonians, had a tradition of the confusion of tongues, and probable reasons have been given for the statement. The very ancient name of the citadel Borsippa has been explained in accordance with this view, and that without violating the fixed principles of philology. We need not wonder if such traditions are shown to have existed; but we ought to wonder if we found them altogether in harmony with the grand primitive simplicity and truthfulness of the inspired record. They would and must be distorted by fabulous and idolatrous elements, and their value would and must consist in the historical relics embodied in them.

With regard to Mr. Smith's legend, an observation of some importance and of wider application must be made ere we close. It strikes us as complex, illustrating the mode in which various traditions got mixed up together, and mixed up at the same time with new elements. An analogous case is supplied by the so-called Gospel of Nicodemus, in which are ideas closely similar to some brought out by Mr. Smith. We do not refer to the fable of Christ's mission to the underworld in all its details, so much as to the story of Seth, who when his father Adam is sick, nigh unto death, sets out for the region of

Paradise, and solicits from an immortal angel the means of securing exemption from death for Adam. Seth is not wholly successful, although he receives a promise of life through the Messiah. This legend is thrust into the apocryphal book, of which it forms no original part, is found elsewhere, and corresponds with other mythological stories illustrative of man's desire to escape from death and attain immortality. The Chaldeans of old had such ideas circulating among them, and embodied them, as others did, in fictitious narratives, around which were clustered, or in which were imbedded, floating traditions of primeval origin.

We shall find that, on dissection, the Izdubar legends are of this character—a recasting of older materials with the introduction of what was new. At the same time we regard the discovery as one of much interest to all lovers of antiquity, and particularly to those who study the Bible. These will value the plain unvarnished narrative of Holy Writ all the more when they see how it is contrasted and yet reflected in the grotesque and distorted legends of a later age. Let us boldly say "a later age," for no one has yet so much as hinted that the composition read by Mr. Smith is as ancient as the book of Genesis, although its traditional and legendary elements have been thought older.

At present all wise men will speak with reserve and caution on certain points of no small moment, still undecided in the translation itself. Thus Sir H. Rawlinson says the name read as Izdubar may turn out very different. In other respects uncertainties will have to be cleared up by diligent ransacking of old mythologies and traditions; and therefore at present all we can confidently say is that a fabulous legend, which must be several centuries older than the Christian era, seems to represent distorted Chaldean traditions of the Deluge. As such it may be referred to, just as the legends recorded by Berossus, or Sanscrit writers, or Mexicans, may be referred to. Its value must not be unduly exaggerated; it is as distinctly mythical, as the Bible account is historical. But it must not be despised; it is a precious addition to those relics of antiquity which retain traces of an origin in fact, the fact in this case being the Deluge recorded in Genesis.

#### THE FLOODS OF NORTH ITALY.

THE English newspapers have given abundant and terrible details of the floods which have lately devastated so great an extent of North Italy. The Papal party in Rome, instead of commiserating the sufferings of their country, have, incredible as it may seem, openly rejoiced in their misery as an evident judgment of God upon them for their overthrow of the temporal power of the Pope. The rabid ultramontane French journal, the "Univers," has also given great expression to its delight in this visitation as one of manifest Divine wrath against the impious excommunicated Italians. They were quite facetious on the subject in an article entitled "Italy under Water." It suits both French and Italian partisans of the Papacy to ignore the very same catastrophes as occurring periodically, even to a greater extent, under the Papal rule.

The fact is, that more awful floods not only wasted Italy under the Popes, but still further back. They



el the  
Adam.  
ves a  
end is  
ms no  
ponds  
man's  
tality.  
lating  
id, in  
ed, or  
meval

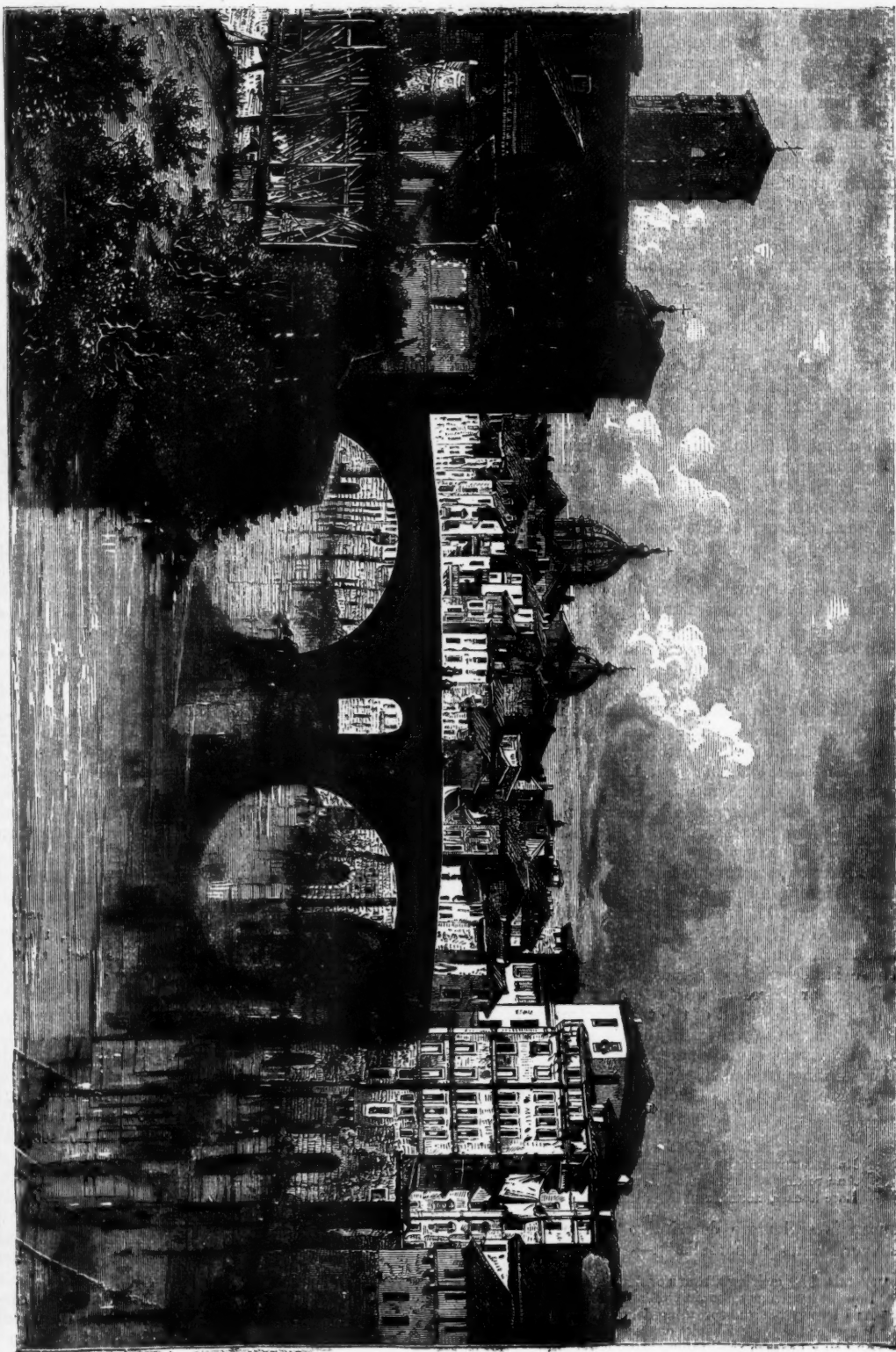
dubar  
older  
new.  
one of  
parti-  
e will  
Writ  
ed and  
gends  
age,"  
ompo-  
book  
endary

eserve  
ment,  
us Sir  
r may  
uncer-  
at ran-  
; and  
say is  
l cen-  
repre-  
eluge.  
gends  
icans,  
unduly  
Bible  
pised;  
tiquity  
fact in  
.

undant  
h have  
Italy.  
erating  
e as it  
an evi-  
rthrow  
ultra-  
as also  
itation  
mpious  
cetious  
under  
rtisans  
rophes  
extent,

wasted  
They

THE ISLAND IN THE TIBER AND BRIDGE OF QUATTRO CAPI.



have been a fruitful source of misfortune to this beautiful country in all ages, and though much has been done to confine the rivers to their banks, the business has not yet been effected, and all the scientific knowledge of these modern times will be required for its completion. Without the application of the best engineering ability, and an outlay of much national capital, the Italians must experience more or less the same destructive scourge of waters every rainy autumn. It is inevitable from their proximity to the Alps and Apennines.

If we revert to almost any past period, we shall find the Po, the Adige, the Brenta, the Arno, and the Tiber, making terrible devastation by their floods. Italian historians give us the following notice of some of them and their effects:—

A.D. 520. In September were twenty days of continuous rain. The rivers of France and Italy made great devastation.

A.D. 586 till 591. Floods prevailed which changed the face of the Venetian territory, the beds and mouths of its rivers, especially of the Adige.

A.D. 1320. Inundations of the Po in October, in which about 10,000 people perished in the districts of Mantua and Polesine. The rains continued for twenty-eight days.

A.D. 1406. A flood at Padua, in the April of this year, carried away bridges and burst through the wall of the city. In Prato della Valle were twelve feet of water.

A.D. 1520. A summer of continuous rains, storms, inundations, earthquakes, famine, pestilence, and four comets.

A.D. 1608. A winter of great snows and vast floods.

A.D. 1617. Floods in Italy and Spain, in which 50,000 people are said to have perished.

A.D. 1668. A memorable year for storms and rain through the whole of Italy. The sun was only seen six or seven times in Padua through a space of eight weeks. In the following year thick fogs prevailed, under which the crops and the fruit perished.

A.D. 1702. Rains began in February and continued upwards of four months. Then followed four months of drought; the crops were burned up, and through the four concluding months heavy rains prevailed, with floods, and in consequence famine.

A.D. 1754 and 1755. Years of alternate rain, cold, dryness, and earthquake.

A.D. 1772. Almost incessant rain for five months.

These inflictions from floods during the reigns of the Popes are greatly worse than what has taken place since the downfall of the temporal power.

If we turn to the writers of the Pagan era, we shall find these rivers equally noted for their impetuous and desolating character, and especially the great and far-stretching Po. Of this river Virgil says in his *Georgics*:—

"Then rising in his might the king of floods  
Rushed through the forest, tore the lofty woods,  
And rolling onwards with a sweeping away,  
Bore houses, flocks, and labouring hinds away."

Lucan is still more descriptive of the ravages of this river, in his "*Pharsalia*":—

"So raised by melting streams of Alpine snow,  
Beyond his utmost margin swells the Po,  
And loosely lets the spreading deluge flow  
Where'er the weaker banks oppressed retreat  
And sink beneath the heaping water's weight.  
Forth gushing at the breach, they force their way,  
And wasteful o'er the drowned country stray.

Far distant fields and meads they wander o'er,  
And visit lands they never knew before.  
Here from its seat the mouldering earth is torn,  
And by the flood to other masters borne,  
Whilst gathering there it heaps the groaning soil,  
And loads the owner with his neighbour's spoil."

Horace gives us equal assurances of the violent outbreaks of the Tiber in his time; and in the middle ages all these rivers maintained too well this unruly character. Their history, at most of the towns on their course, is that of carrying away the most substantial bridges time after time. The Italian poet Berni, speaking of the Adige, at Verona, says:—

"The rapid river from its Alps descending,  
Wild and impetuous, cleaves the town asunder,  
Like the Meander circling as it flows."

Rising in the mountains of the Austrian Tyrol, it comes down the Brenner Pass and collects from a hundred stony heights in its career a rush of water in rainy seasons that bears all before it. Its floods are tremendous. One which took place in the thirteenth century is commemorated at Verona in the ancient frescoes of the Cathedral. In 1757 it carried clear away the Ponte delle Navie; and in August, 1845, it inundated the whole town, so that, like another Venice, its houses were only reached by boats.

The Tiber, though rising only in the Apennines, is, as I have already said, equally famous for its sudden floods from the earliest times of the old empire downwards. Tarquinius Priscus, six hundred years before the Christian era, embanked it in the neighbourhood of Rome, to protect the city; yet from time to time it rose in sudden inundation, and compelled the Romans to cut a canal from above the city to the sea to relieve its main current. Notwithstanding this, the bridges of the city were repeatedly washed away, especially the Pons Emilius, now the "Ponte Rotto," or the broken bridge, from the arches on the left bank never having been restored; whilst the Pons Sublicius was so often destroyed by floods, that from A.D. 780 it was left a ruin, its piers being afterwards removed, and the foundations alone left.

The same has been the fate of the bridges over the Arno at Florence. Though this river also rises only in the Apennines, at no great distance to the east of Florence, yet its sudden flushes are such, though in general it has so little water in its bed, that it requires an artificial weir. It has carried away repeatedly every bridge erected over it, with the exception of the two suspension bridges of modern times. Of the four old bridges, the Ponte alle Grazie, after many partial injuries by floods, was nearly destroyed by one in 1557. The Ponte Vecchio, or old bridge, was destroyed by floods in 1179, and again in 1333. Any destruction now must be something tremendous, as it is covered with houses and shops, a curious and interesting vestige of the life of the middle ages. The Ponte de Santa Trinita has been swept away many times. Once in 1252, again in 1274 and in 1347, and in September of 1557 it was entirely swept away by an extraordinary flood which occurred, and which overthrew at the same time two arches of the next bridge, the Ponte Carraja. This, formerly called Ponte Nuova, in contradistinction to the Ponte Vecchio, was destroyed by a flood in 1269; again in 1333, at the same time as the Ponte Vecchio, and again two arches of it in 1557. On all these occasions a great part of

Floren  
water.

But  
the m  
by the  
tations  
separ  
tude o  
into th  
mazy v  
the Ad  
Folle.

Tass  
Deliver  
poets m

"I  
T  
F  
A  
P  
C  
T  
A

A gl  
what s  
of flat  
and ex  
with it  
dred E  
ordinar  
journe  
was on  
tour,"  
with o  
has tr  
"the  
are ver

A g  
various  
stand  
manner  
sequen  
Along  
devasta  
Valenz  
Po an  
Trebbi  
Guasta  
of thes  
river, s  
its over  
less so.

The  
such di  
month  
torrent  
abunda  
At F  
the mo  
one da  
past tw  
tropical  
hours.

We  
such lo  
Italy q  
bridges  
pended  
with us  
us her

Florence and the surrounding country were under water.

But of all the Italian rivers, the Po has ever been the most terrible in its devastations, as shown both by the list of inundations given above, and by the quotations from the poets. Rising in the lofty Alps that separate Piedmont from Savoy, and fed by a multitude of mountain torrents, it descends from all sides into the vast plains of Lombardy, and sweeps on in many windings across the broadest part of Italy to the Adriatic, into which it rushes at the delta Della Felle.

Tasso, in the eleventh canto of the "Jerusalem Delivered," adds his testimony to that of the Roman poets regarding its formidable character:—

"Descending swiftly from its Alpine snows,  
The Po fills not at first its ample bed,  
But swelling ever as it onward goes,  
Anon it proudly lifts its threatening head,  
Breaks from its banks, and rushing on in dread,  
O'erwhelms the champagne with a thousand woes,  
The Adriatic strikes with fierce commotion,  
And carries war, not tribute, to the ocean."

A glance at the map of Northern Italy will show what a succession of towns, and what a vast extent of flat country, this formidable river runs through and endangers as well as feeds, through a course, with its many windings, of not less than three hundred English miles. Oliver Goldsmith, in that extraordinary pedestrian journey of his, a most amazing journey at that time of day, when travelling in Italy was only known to those who made "the grand tour," or any one furnished, as he probably was, with only his flute and the king's English,—yet he has truly characterised this river in one phrase, "the wandering Po," for its devious wanderings are very remarkable.

A great deal of embankment has been done at various periods, and these banks, in many places, stand aloft, looking down on the level country in a manner that shows what must be the frightful consequences of a rupture of them during a flood. Along the course of the Po, especially exposed to its devastations, are the cities of Turin, Chivasso, Casale, Valenza; Pavia, near to which is the junction of the Po and the Ticino; Piacenza, near to which the Trebbia joins the Po; Cremona, Casalmaggiore, Guastalla, Revere, Ferrara, and other towns. Some of these cities, though not situated precisely on the river, are yet near enough to feel all the effects of its overflow, and the country far round them not less so.

The rains of the last autumn, which produced such disastrous effects, seemed to come on with the month of October, and, with some intervals, fell in torrents through the whole month, accompanied by abundant thunder and lightning.

At Perugia, where we spent the greater part of the month, the thunder and lightning continued one day from seven o'clock in the morning to half-past twelve at noon, with incessant rain, of a really tropical character, which lasted four-and-twenty hours.

We never witnessed a thunderstorm or rain of such long duration. From all parts of the north of Italy quickly arrived news of inundations, broken bridges, houses washed away, railway traffic suspended. Friends of ours who had spent the summer with us in the Tyrol, and who were impatient to join us here on their way to Rome, found themselves

arrested at Prato, near Florence, by a bridge that had given way, and on approaching Florence saw a great part of the city near the river under water. Three years before, this same party, travelling by the same route, were stopped at Botzen for the greater part of a week by the outburst of the waters of the Adige, and were put not only to the most serious inconvenience themselves, but became the witnesses of such an amount of human suffering and desolation as it is impossible to describe. Now, however, the waters, comparatively speaking, inconvenienced them but little, though at almost every step they were called upon to sympathise with the alarm and distress of the people shut up in their houses or flying from anticipated danger.

Still more alarming news came from Pisa on the 14th of October. The floods had invaded the town; the expensive works which had been undertaken by the municipality as defences against inundation, were found to be utterly useless, and the only checks to the waters were the old walls and parapets that had fortunately been left. Great indignation pervaded the city, and this was intensified by the devastation of the flood on the following day, when a vast extent of country was under water, bridges and embankments destroyed, and the very baggage of travellers floated out of the railway station. A family of our acquaintance on their way to Rome were detained, with many other travellers, some days in this unfortunate city. A great meeting of the inhabitants was called, and a resolution of censure passed on the municipal authorities by an overwhelming majority, and an address forwarded to the Government demanding the removal of the prefect and councillors.

In the meantime the rains continued, and nothing was heard of but terrible floods, the breaking up of bridges and railway lines, the sweeping away of houses and mills, and the flight of thousands of inhabitants who remained without shelter. From Genoa came awful accounts: the railway traffic was interrupted between that city and Alessandria, Ventimiglia, Chiavari, Emilia, Bologna, Lucca, Piacenza, Sienna, Parma, Revere. In fact, everywhere the vicinity of the northern rivers furnished the same sad story of the country under water, people flying along the embankments to the towns, whilst the soil of their lands, their olives and their vineyards, their property of whatever kind it might be, and their cattle, were swept away by the impetuous torrents. The soldiers were ordered to the most imperilled points to render all possible assistance, and everywhere they displayed the most ready and active sympathy and devotion to the suffering population. The engineers, both civil and military, and the officials of all degrees, were on the spots most threatened, and money was speedily raised to save the destitute crowds from starvation, and every means used to bring them under cover.

It is not my object to give a history of these harrowing events, nor would our space allow it, for during several months the Italian papers were full of the details of watery ruin. The lands, having just been ploughed up and recently sown, were just in the state for the wasting torrents to carry away the surface, and with it the hopes of the coming year. The rains that fell subsequently were also very destructive, and again and again the alarm was raised. According to the accounts from all quarters, the damage seems to be almost beyond calculation, and earnest appeals were made to Government to furnish funds for the assistance of the injured agriculturists; funds, unfor-



tunately, being just the thing in which the Italian Government is itself most wanting.

A couple of extracts from the newspapers will give sufficient idea of the scenes which for several weeks were occurring night and day in this suffering portion of Italy:—

"Polesella, October 24th.—A motley multitude of people—women with their little ones clasped to their bosoms or clinging to their dress; men with huge bundles, all flying along the raised banks of the rivers from the flood-invaded country, in hurried anxiety to reach some place of safety, for their chattels and valuables; cattle and horses, some saddled as for flight, some driven on to save themselves, the whole a dreary picture of agitation and affright; but, alas! seen on all hands, and never to be forgotten! Tens of thousands of sacks and canvas bags, whole boat-loads of them, are in the meantime arriving from sympathetic towns at the places most in danger, to be filled with earth and piled up to secure the banks from the furious torrents."

"October 24th.—At two o'clock in the last night occurred on the left bank of the Po a scene so terrible that it is impossible to describe it. The startling noise made by the fall of an old building, which, undermined by the water, fell near the Borgo di Colto, caused a guardian of the wooden booths, which are always thickly placed along the raised embankments in time of flood, to believe that the Po had burst the chief embankment, and he cried out in terror, 'Fly! sound the storm-bell! The Po has broken in at Colto!'

"This fatal and inconsiderate cry ran from hut to hut, from mouth to mouth, with the speed of lightning, over a territory of nearly thirty square miles thickly studded with the dwellings of a rural population. A wild flight took place in the pitch darkness of the night, amidst the agonised cries of men, women, children, who, snatching up what they could hope to save, rushed desperately towards the higher embankments. In this chaos of terror and confusion seven thousand people are said to have been involved. Quantities of household property and cattle were lost in the blind stampede, and could not be recovered till morning. One poor woman dropped unperceived her baby, which she was carrying, with other of her valuables, and continued to search for, as one half-distracted, through the whole night. Fortunately, it was found in the early dawn and still alive. This scene of wretchedness, which extended over so wide an extent of country, was rendered the more appalling by the furious ringing of the storm-bells in the different villages, the whole, unfortunately, being the result of the want of presence of mind in one terrified watchman."

The first and great cause of this recurring calamity of floods in North Italy is the vicinity of the lofty ranges of the Alps, from which rains and melting snows, but principally heavy rains, descending in sudden torrents, overpower the capacity of the river-beds below. From this cause the Italian plains suffer, in common with those of France, Switzerland, and Germany, from the waters of the Rhone, the Durance, the Rhine, the Danube, and other rivers. The second cause is the filling up the beds of these rivers, through a long succession of years, by the drift brought down from the mountains by the torrents. The effect of time in silting up the Italian rivers may be judged of by this circumstance, that in the time of the Roman emperors the Tiber was navigable to Perugia, sixty

miles or so north of Rome, whilst at present it is navigable only to Rome itself for small vessels. Many people are of opinion that the stripping the mountains of their woods, which has taken place to a great extent during the later and more populous periods, and especially so in Piedmont, has added to the rapidity of the inundations. No doubt this may have facilitated the rapid descent of the waters by removing the impeding obstacle of millions of boles of trees. But we see by ancient writers that Italy was subject to the same calamity when the mountains probably were clothed with forests; and it must be borne in mind that a vast surface of Alpine hills consists of bare rock and steep descents, interspersed with ravines and gullies down which the waters rush in rainy weather with instantaneous velocity, courses which the torrents have made for themselves from the beginning of time.

For long ages, Italy, under the rule of the foreigner and priest, has suffered its rivers to become silted up, and though embanking them has been carried on at different periods from the sheer necessity of saving the country from drowning, this bears no proportion to the existing need. If Italy is to be saved from the almost annual infliction of such calamities as it has witnessed this last winter, there must be a large expenditure of capital in embanking and clearing out the beds of the rivers. Nothing can be easier than the latter of these operations, for during the long summer months most of the rivers shrink into insignificant streams, and leave the greater portion of their beds bare to the hand of the navy. Even the Tiber and the Po present extensive fields of drift, which if cleared out would at once aid the embankment, and leave a free bed to the waters on the commencement of the rainy periods, which would take a long time to fill. The Roman Emperor Aurelian set the excellent example sixteen hundred years ago of clearing out the bed of the Tiber, and some of the Roman rulers cut a canal from above Rome to the coast as an extra vent for its swollen waters, the traces of which are still visible. Mr. Ruskin has proposed that in the upper beds of all these Alpine rivers, weirs should be made at intervals to retard the rapid descent of the floods. Probably this might have a good effect, but it would be at an enormous labour, considering the thousands of tributary torrents which descend for hundreds of miles of these Alpine regions.

The circumstance most unpropitious, however, to these important and necessary works at this moment is the inefficiency of the Italian Government. There has as yet been only one Cavour. Probably, however, the late awful visitation, backed by the reasonable expostulations of the people and the press, may lead to efficient measures being taken; if so, these terrible but temporary calamities may be productive of permanent and incalculable good.

We observe with pleasure that the stone embankment of the Upper Rhine in Switzerland, in the neighbourhood of Ragatz, confining that otherwise lawless and ungovernable river to a regular channel, is reported to have stood all the assaults of the late floods, and prevented their extending over the lands they used annually to inundate. This is a practical proof that the people of Italy have only to follow in this track of management in order to become rulers of their rivers, which are at present, and have been for so many ages, their domineering tyrants and desolators.

MARY HOWITT.

## THE WORKING CLASSES ABROAD.

It is impossible to pay any serious attention to the condition of the working classes, and the state of feeling on the subject of their rights and claims at this moment prevailing among them, without being made aware that they are the subjects of no small amount of misconception on the score of their actual position, both in regard to the capitalists at home and to their fellow-workers abroad. It was probably from a conviction of this fact that the Government last year issued circulars to our diplomatic and consular agents directing them to obtain and forward to the Home Office such information as it was in their power to arrive at. The topics to which their inquiry was specially directed were: the rate of wages paid to workmen—the power of purchase or spending value (which alone determines the real amount of the wage)—the house and lodging accommodation and sanitary arrangements—the quality of the work done by the workmen—and the advantages or disadvantages presented by each country to Englishmen seeking employment abroad. The reports sent home by the numerous consuls have been published in two thick blue-books, and they contain a large amount of matter well worthy of perusal, but not likely, we fear, from its extent and diffusiveness, to be read by those whom it most concerns. It is our intention, therefore, to travel through these heavy tomes in the interest of the general reader, and of the working man in particular; feeling assured that the spread of knowledge on this subject, and the familiarising of the home worker with the real condition of the worker in other countries, can hardly fail of yielding satisfactory results. As our space is but narrow, we must unavoidably be brief, and shall content ourselves with culling such items of information as are most immediately interesting from the point of view of the worker. It does not much matter with what country we begin. The first which offers itself is—

## I. BELGIUM.

Belgium is the most densely-peopled country in Europe, and its working population is in greater proportion to the rest of the inhabitants than is the case in any other continental kingdom. Even in the most busy times there is always a superabundance of hands competing for employment, while in times of crisis the worker has to face greater privation and hardship. It is a fact that more than one-fifth of the entire population are on the lists of poor relief, and the recipients are for the most part the inferior classes of working men and their families, whose condition is often most deplorable. Though there is no lack of free schools, great ignorance prevails among the lower orders. In 1867, of the recruits drawn for the militia, forty per cent. were unable to read or write, though this proportion has diminished of late years. The wages of the workers vary exceedingly, some of them receiving scarcely sufficient to provide the barest necessities, while a few seem to be overpaid. Thus, while carpenters, masons, smiths, plumbers, bookbinders, etc., get an average of something less than half-a-crown a day, the diamond-polisher can earn 8s., the diamond-splitter 12s. or more, the skilled cabinet-maker 6s., the clever painter from

5s. to 8s., and the first-class bootmaker from 6s. to 8s. Wood-carvers and stone-cutters earn about 3s. 3d. a day, while the ordinary day-labourer has to be content with 1s. 7d. The journeyman cigar-maker of Antwerp, working "by the lump at a fixed price," turns out from 2,500 to 3,000 cigars a week, and is paid about 24s. In the factories where women are employed they earn about a shilling a day, and the daily wage of children varies from 6d. to as low as 2d. or 3d. The wage of the agriculturist is 2s. a day in summer and 1s. 3d. in winter, and women in the fields earn half those amounts. Girls and women who work with sewing-machines gain from 20d. to 2s. In the neighbourhood of Charleroi the brickmakers earn about 4s. 6d. a day, but they can only work for a few months in the year (from April to September); in the autumn they apply themselves to different trades and occupations, the majority of them working at nail-making, at which they will drudge from five in the morning till eight at night, earning about 15d. in as many hours. In the mines and quarries the average pay does not exceed 2s. 6d. a day, the day consisting of twelve hours. The most lucrative of all employments seems to be that of glass-blowing, which has its head-quarters in the environs of Charleroi. The best blowers earn from £4 to £6 a week, and those of the second class from £2 10s. to £3; the assistants, stokers, etc., getting from £1 to £2. The hours of work throughout Belgium are generally twelve, with intervals for meals varying altogether from one and a half to two hours.

As to the purchasing power of wages, it may be said that though it varies greatly (some articles being much dearer and others much cheaper than in England), yet, taking all things into consideration, it is much the same in Belgium as it is here. It must not, however, be inferred that the cost of living to the working man is the same in both countries. The Belgian feeds chiefly on potatoes; in the morning he breakfasts on coffee without sugar or milk, and rye-bread; he dines on potato soup or potatoes and fish, or occasionally a little meat or lard; at four he has the same food as at breakfast, and the remains of his dinner serve for his supper. Tea or cheese he rarely tastes, but will eat a raw apple with his bread by way of relish. Sugar is nearly double the price it is with us; meat is 25 per cent. cheaper; so are butter and eggs; milk half price; fuel and light are dearer; soap is very dear indeed; clothing and the materials for clothing are much dearer, with the exception of shoes, which are not only cheaper than English shoes, but better made and more durable. The luxuries of the workman are cheaper than with us: thus spirits are unfortunately obtainable at a very low price, the effect of which is but too visible in the prevalence of intoxication; tobacco, sold in England at 3s. or 4s. a pound, costs from 6d. to 10d., and cigars which in London would be 4d. a-piece, are in Belgium about ½d. The beer, though not strong, is good and cheap. An Antwerp artisan leaving home with fivepence in his pocket, can purchase four pints of beer during the day. Rent is somewhat lower than in England. Single men are boarded and lodged (two in a bed) at Antwerp for 6s. 10d. a week; married workmen can rent rooms at from 6s. to 9s. 7d. a month. In Belgium

the workman often pays his rent, and something more, by a species of industry to which the English workman seldom if ever has recourse. If he cannot get a piece of land from one of the communes, he will rent a little plot from a farmer, will cultivate it industriously, and raise from it all the vegetables he requires for his family, and some overplus for sale. This is one phase of the thrift which characterises the Belgian; another is shown in his prudence with regard to matrimony, on which he rarely ventures at an early age; and a third is his propensity for saving, which leads him to make any sacrifice for the sake of acquiring a house of his own. These virtues contrast oddly with other of his characteristics: thus he is a foe to constant, persistent work; he *will* keep the fête days, and attend the numerous fairs, which latter last an inordinate time—it may be for a month together; he solemnises St. Monday by devoting it to dissipation, and he takes so many holidays in the course of the year that it is said the time during which he is actually at work does not in the case of skilled workmen extend over three-fifths of the working days.

Though the home of the Belgian workman may be but humble and poorly furnished, it is generally extremely neat and clean—a state of things conformable to the national habits, and due mediately to the care of the wife and house manager. Much importance is attached to this business of cleanliness. In Antwerp prizes for cleanliness are distributed annually by the municipal authorities to the most deserving among a certain class of the working population—the cleanliness here spoken of applying chiefly to the order and tidiness displayed by housewives in their dwellings, and as regards domestic arrangements, and not to personal ablution. Personal cleanliness is provided for by the cheap baths for washing, and the public swimming baths, the workmen resorting freely to the latter and making but small use of the former. The outer clothing of the native workman consists almost universally of the blouse and the cap, though most of them possess a good suit of broadcloth in which they make their appearance on special occasions. The women, it is said (and the trait is by no means peculiar to Belgium), are too much given to dress for effect, and will spend in outside show the money which should provide them with comfortable and seasonable garments. The winter clothing of the workman differs from that of summer merely by the use of an additional woollen shirt. Men, women, and children alike wear the “*blokken*,” or wooden shoes, purchasable at 6*d.* or 8*d.* a pair.

In sickness, and at times when work fails, the workman is, at least it seems so to us, but too much coddled and looked after. There are too many charities to which he can apply; he can at all times get medical aid gratuitously; he can live in the workhouse all day when out of employ, and can go home at night; and he is pretty sure of relief upon applying to a convent at any time. This sort of thing hinders the growth of his independence, and it is no doubt one of the causes of the exceedingly low condition of the mass of the Belgian industrials, as well as of the discontent they so frequently manifest. On the other hand, it is very doubtful whether the whole of the money earned by the native workers is fairly sufficient to defray the cost of their maintenance; their number is far too great for the area they occupy—they are compelled to compete for employment that is not remunerative, and it is hard to say what the inferior

class of workmen would do if it were not for the very charities whose operation saps their independence and self-reliance.

It will be obvious to the reader from what we have said, that Belgium does not offer a very inviting field for the English working man. The few English workmen scattered throughout the country at present are chiefly employed as foremen or overlookers in manufacturing establishments, and are usually engaged under special contracts before leaving England. These workmen, living in the receipt of higher wages than are generally paid, occupy an exceptional position; they live comfortably and often fall in with the Belgian habits and ways. An English artisan, however, who might be induced to go to Belgium for the purpose of seeking employment, would be almost sure to meet with disappointment; and even should he succeed in obtaining work he would not be likely to benefit by the change.

As to the quality of the work executed by the Belgian artisan, it is far from being on the whole of a high class. In works of a certain kind, as in wood-carving, marble-cutting, boot and shoe-making, the native workman excels; in other crafts he is less capable, producing rather a cheap and specious-looking article than a really good one. In some kinds of work where good taste is required, the best hands are generally either Germans or Frenchmen, who receive much better pay than the native ever earns. A fondness for work for its own sake—that instinct which leads a man to put his own character into his performance—seems almost unknown among the Belgians, while we read, on the other hand, that in some districts the men, being ground down to the minimum of wages, make no scruple of wantonly damaging the property of their employers. All disputes between masters and men are settled by trade councils (*conseils de prudhommes*) which were established in 1859. When a case occurs for decision by the council, it is referred in the first instance to a committee of two, one master and one man, whose business it is to bring about a friendly arrangement if they can. In practice this method answers so well that full seven-eighths of the disputes which arise are settled by the two referees, without coming before the council at all.

In addition to ordinary elementary schools, there are industrial schools for the benefit of the working classes, in which gratuitous instruction is imparted not only in the arts of industry, but in languages, mathematics, and other branches of learning. Moreover, in Antwerp the artisans have the advantage of being admitted gratuitously to attend the classes of the Royal Academy of the Fine Arts, one of the first institutions of the kind in Europe. Over 1,600 of the workers of Antwerp, representing nearly all departments of industry, attend these classes, and many have thus attained a most enviable facility in practical drawing, a talent which adds materially to their value in the workshop. It is plain that the Government of Belgium has not been unmindful of her industrial classes, whose abnormal numbers and whose necessities, indeed, it were worse than impolitic to ignore. In 1847, the “*Décoration Ouvrière*” (Workman’s Decoration) was established by royal decree. The decoration is a badge of distinction conferred on workmen and artisans of recognised ability and good conduct. Those who obtain this honourable distinction are entitled to wear the decoration attached by a tricolor ribbon on the left



breast. It consists of an oblong badge of elegant workmanship, of gold for the first-class and silver for the second, relieved by a border of blue enamel and surmounted by a crown, and it forms altogether a handsome ornament. It is accompanied by an artistically engraved diploma, setting forth the name, occupation, and qualifications of the recipient, the same being usually framed and hung in a conspicuous place in the artisan's dwelling. No workman is eligible for the first-class decoration who has not already gained the second-class. The kind of merit which is thus rewarded may be seen from the report for 1870, in which it is stated that P. Jacobs, after working forty years under the same master, and manifesting great ability and good conduct, became entitled to the second-class decoration. Four other workmen, for similar merits, gained the same decoration at the same time. We question much the use of such an institution as this: one thing is certain—it would affront an English workman's self-respect, and its honours (if they are honours) would be monopolised by the most servile class.

Provident institutions have made considerable progress of late years in Belgium, where they were almost unknown a generation back. They consist of friendly societies, co-operative societies, savings banks, and people's banks, which last combine the advantages of loan societies with those of savings banks. There are in the province of Antwerp alone no less than twenty-one of these societies.

Amusements on the whole are cheap in Belgium, and there is all the more demand for them that there is nothing at all in the country corresponding to that plentiful periodical issue of cheap and wholesome reading, which, thanks to the efforts of our own writers and publishers, occupies so large a portion of the leisure of our working classes. Beyond their newspapers, the middle and lower classes of Belgium have little or nothing in the shape of cheap serial literature, and they thus lose the benefit of one of the most fertile sources of amusement and means of profit. In Antwerp this want is, indeed, in some measure supplied by free popular lectures, and by the general use of a free lending library—the books lent out being, as a rule, extremely well taken care of by the borrowers.

One word in conclusion. An Englishman going to Belgium to work at the invitation of a Belgian employer will do well to have a formal contract drawn up, with good guarantees for the due observance of its conditions—because it is too common a thing for a Belgian manufacturer to engage a foreigner for the sole purpose of learning his methods of work or the secrets of his craft, and to send him adrift as soon as he has squeezed him dry.

## Varieties.

**STORY OF A PICTURE.**—The Rotunda of the Capitol at Washington is adorned with historical pictures by great painters. One of them has a story which the artist told me one summer evening on the Hudson. The picture is the embarkation of the Pilgrim Fathers. The artist is Weir. He was a sceptic, an utter unbeliever in Christianity, when he selected his theme. A subject relating to American history was required, and he made choice of this without a thought of its religious associations. Having made the drawing upon the wide-stretched

canvas, he began to lay on the colours. There was Robinson on his knees, and Miles Standish in his armour, and Rose in her beauty and glory, and the group of men and women! Well, what for were they there? He perceived, as they lay in his mind uncreated, that they were animated by some principle of which he himself had no consciousness. He could not paint what he could not comprehend. He knew nothing more of the sentiment of those pilgrims than does a deaf man of the concord of sweet sounds. He studied their times, their lives, their deeds, their sacrifices, their purposes, and losses. And as he studied, the truth gradually stole into his own soul that they were of a race to which he did not belong. They had a life within them he had never lived. They were in a world of which he knew less than he did of the fixed stars. Mr. Weir told me that he studied the subject till he became a Christian, and then he did that work—the great work of his life. He found the secret spring of all their action was their religion. Their life was "hid with Christ in God." Home, ease, wealth, country—what was all this to them, who sought freedom to live for Christ!—DR. I. PRIME.

**THISTLES IN NEW ZEALAND.**—Many maledictions have been thrown at the Scotchman who first carried thistle seed to the Antipodes. It turns out, however, that the mischief was not permanent; at least if we may believe a paragraph from New Zealand, headed "Good out of Evil":—"It may be interesting to English and still more to patriotic Scotch readers to learn that the Scotch thistle plays a very important part in this colony in assisting the spread of the English grass. It has, indeed, proved a most valuable agent in preparing the rough fern hills for the reception of grass seed. The thistle has its fling for three or four years, taking full possession of the ground, but though inconvenient it is by no means without its uses during that time, for sheep, cattle, and horses greedily devour the seed heads when in blossom, and often eat the leaves of the plant as well, and many runs when under thistles have carried more stock than when the weed appeared. After the thistle has exhausted the land of its particular requirements, and has died out, which it does in about four years, it is invariably found that stray plants of English grass and clover have been nursed into strength by their prickly neighbours, and that the long, full taproots of the thistle have opened and pulverised the surface soil and prepared a seed-bed in which the English grass takes root and flourishes far better than on the natural surface of ground which has not been subjected to a similar course of preparation."

**GAS LEAKAGE.**—It is estimated that one-fourth of the gas made in London is lost by leakage through the main pipes, and the consumers pay on an average one shilling per 1,000 feet extra on account of this waste. About 400,000 tons of coals are yearly wasted in London by this pipe leakage. The subsoil is impregnated by the escaped gas, and becomes noxious as well as offensive.

**TOWTON FIELD ROSES.**—A correspondent near the battle fields of Towton, writes to say that M. Planché's poem in the "Leisure Hour" for December, is not accurate as to the colour of the roses. Their singularity consists in their being "white dashed with red," containing in the same flower the rival hues of York and Lancaster. People in the neighbourhood say that in former times the red streaks were far more pronounced, being formerly deep red, each year showing less and less of the Lancashire colour. This is accounted for by the ceaseless efforts made to extirpate the bushes, which are chopped, dug up, and trampled down in the most ruthless manner. The roses grow not only in the Acre, where the dead were buried, but also on the banks of the river Cock, which on the day of battle is said to have run red with Lancastrian blood.—E. E. G. (Scarthingwell by Tadcaster).

**BUDDHIST TEMPLE IN CHINA.**—Miss L. Fay, a lady attached to the American Church Mission, describes a visit to a Buddhist temple and nunnery as follows:—"I wish I could describe to you a Buddhist temple and nunnery—its high, dark walls; its numerous courts; its long, low, rambling halls and chambers, filled with shrines and a multitudinous variety of idols of all shapes, sizes, and conditions—numerous gilded Buddhas, with blue hair, black mouths, and red eyes, sometimes represented standing, and sometimes sitting on a lotus-flower; the Goddess of Mercy, who assumes a great many forms, the most popular of which is "the thousand-handed Goddess of Mercy," in allusion to the great benefits she is supposed to bestow on those who worship her; and the smaller idol-gods and goddesses, with the avenging deities that fill up every niche and corner around and on both sides of the high altar, before which incense is continually burning, and worshippers continually kneeling. We were ushered in through several small courts, in which stood huge tripods, or incense-burners, into a reception-room, where

two or three nuns received us civilly. I asked for the lady abbess, but was told she was not at home. The prioress, however, soon appeared, accompanied by several more nuns, and we were invited into a larger reception-room—one side of which was quite filled with idols—in the centre of which was a gilt shrine, hung with artificial flowers, in which sat a full-sized Goddess of Mercy, clad in embroidery, with a crown on her head, from which depended strings of pearls, that nearly covered her face like a veil of rich fringe. As we were invited to sit down, we did so, and I began conversation by asking the prioress some questions about their mode of living, which is supposed to be very strict and abstemious. In return, she asked me many questions about the 'doctrine of Jesus'; how many fast days I kept in the year; and if I passed all my time in repeating prayers, which is considered one of the first and highest duties of the Buddhists. Tea was then brought in, served in tiny covered china cups, and placed on a small table at our side. As I took the cover off my cup to taste the tea with, in place of teaspoon, there seemed to be only a few rose-leaves in the bottom of the cup, and the water quite colourless; yet, on tasting it, I found the flavour exquisite—such tea as is only seen in China. We sat about half an hour longer, and then, as the perfume of burning sandal-wood and the smoke of the incense gave me a headache, I rose to take leave, amid many protestations of Chinese politeness that I should not go so soon, and many pressing invitations to come again; and walked sadly away, thinking, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' and how can a simple missionary exert an influence in these strongly-fortified holds of the arch-deceiver? In a Christian land one can form little idea of what idolatry really is; or with how much of learning, wealth, gorgeous display, and attractive courtesy, it is bound around the homes, the hearts, the affections, the very lives of the heathen."

**DEAF AND DUMB MARRIAGE CEREMONY.**—At St. George's, Bloomsbury, there were joined together in holy matrimony a perfectly deaf and dumb bridegroom and a deaf and dumb bride. Neither, however, we learned, was born deaf and dumb. The clergyman read the service very slowly aloud for the benefit of the congregation, and, at the same time, with a considerable amount of gesticulation, by means of the deaf and dumb alphabet upon his fingers, for the enlightenment of the happy couple. The bride and bridegroom took their allotted parts in the service by means of their fingers. A little amusement was caused by the inability of the bride to explain that a certain gentleman who had been put forward by those officiating was not the one she had herself chosen for her partner; but the clergyman soon came to the relief of the distressed bride.—*Post*.

**ST. PAUL'S REPARATION FUND.**—In the chapter house of St. Paul's, London, may be seen three books which relate to the decoration and completion of the Cathedral. One of these contains the autograph signatures of Her Majesty, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and Prince Alfred, inscribed on the occasion of the solemn Thanksgiving Day last February, and the amount of their promised subscriptions to the fund. These are followed on the next page by the signatures of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and the Lord Mayor (the three *ex officio* trustees of the fabric), and those of other donors of contributions, varying from £1,000 down to a single guinea. The other two books belong to the seventeenth century. One of them has on its first page the following autographs of Kings Charles II and James II, which will explain themselves:—"I will give one thousand pounds a year withall (*sic*) 20 March 1678.—CHARLES R." "I will give two hundred pounds a year to begin from Midsommer day last past. July 17, 1678.—JAMES." On the subsequent pages are similar promises of various annual payments of £20, £50, and £100, signed by the leading men of the age, including the Lord Chancellor Finch, the Earls of Danby, Anglesey, Bath, Worcester, Northampton, Essex, Ailesbury, and Berkeley; the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Sancroft), the Bishop of London (Dr. Henry Compton), and the Bishop of Durham (Dr. N. Crewe). The other volume, of a little earlier date, is even more full and complete. It contains the letters patent for "making collections and receiving of contributions for the necessary repairs of St. Paul's," granted December 3, 1661, and signed with the royal sign manual. Then follows the "Book of Subscription, 1661," headed by Charles II, who promises the gift of a thousand pounds "by the year," dating from the 12th day of June, in the sixteenth year of his reign. On the fly-leaf is copied the appropriate text out of 2 Chronicles, xxiv. 10:—"And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end. . . . So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of

God in his state, and strengthened it." Then follows the written promise of Dr. Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury, as having been formerly Bishop of London, engaging to pay £2,000 in quarterly instalments, the balance due, in case of his death, to be paid by his executors; while the following noblemen bind themselves in annual subscriptions varying in amount from £100 to £20; the Lord Chancellor Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, the Archbishop of York (Dr. R. Sterne), the Earls of Southampton, Albemarle, Ormonde, Sandwich, and Anglesey; Lords Ashley and Carbery, the Bishop of London (Dr. Humphrey Henchman), and the Bishop of Winchester (Dr. George Morley). This volume is of especial interest, as being dated before the Great Fire, and referring therefore to Old St. Paul's. Among the graves in the crypt under the east-end aisles of the Cathedral are those of Sir Christopher Wren himself; Barry, the painter; Sir Joshua Reynolds, Benjamin West, Opie, Fuseli, Turner, Sir Thomas Lawrence, Dean Milman, Canon Melville, Archdeacon Hale, Professor Cockerell, Mylne, and Rennie. Indeed, so many of our artists and architects lie here that the southern aisle has come to be called "Painters' Corner." Under the central dome, as our readers are aware, lie the bodies of Nelson and Wellington—the latter in a magnificent sarcophagus made out of a single block of black Cornish porphyry, which was finished only six or seven years ago; while the former rests in, or rather under, another sarcophagus, which, though smaller in size, supasses its neighbour in interest as having been originally prepared by Cardinal Wolsey for himself, and placed by him with that view in St. George's Chapel at Windsor. Not far from Wellington lies Sir Thomas Picton, whose body was removed hither a few years since from Bayswater; and near to Lord Nelson rest his brother admirals, Lords Northesk and Collingwood.

**LOUIS XIV. AT CHURCH.**—Father Seraphin, a Capuchin, preaching before Louis XIV., the Abbé Fénélon, the King's Almoner, fell asleep during the sermon. The preacher perceiving it stopped abruptly and exclaimed, "Waken that sleeping abbé, who is evidently here only to pay his court to the king." Fénélon was fond of relating this anecdote, and with unaffected nobleness of mind, praised both the preacher and the king, who, by his silence, approved the freedom. He used to narrate another incident; one day the king was astonished to perceive not a person at the service, which was usually crowded with courtiers, and Fénélon alone was with him. He asked the Major of the Guard what was the reason. "Sire," he answered, "it was given out that your Majesty would not attend service this morning. I am happy in your having this opportunity of knowing those who come hither to pay their devotions to God, and who only come to pay their court to your majesty."

**INDIAN NAMES.**—The Indian authorities have done their best to compel the use of an un-English method of spelling Indian names. Like every attempt to insist upon a custom that people naturally hate, it has been a complete failure. Every one knows that the ordinary English reader abominates the use of foreign vowels, and will be deterred from reading a book simply from the use of an unintelligible system of spelling names of places that in their ordinary dress would be quite well known. We urge our countrymen to read about India, to make themselves familiar with the history and government of the country, and we begin by putting before them every possible difficulty in the way of knowing the names of places. The recently adopted official mode of spelling, to all intents and purposes thrusts upon home readers a host of new unpronounceable words. How is it to be expected that the ordinary reader should know that "Kánpúr" means Cawnpore; "Lakhnáu," Lucknow; or that "Máu" and Mhow are identical, and that "satti" means the familiar word suttee? We are convinced that sooner or later the scholars of India will have to undo for general purposes all they have done; and the sooner they set about it the better. The confusion created at present is most unfortunate, and leads to constant misconception on the part of the uninitiated. It is surely not too much to ask that familiar names should retain their established form, and that English, not French or German, vowels should be made to do duty as a rule. This is unquestionably the English view of the matter.—*Homeward Mail*.

**SIMPLICITY AND SINCERITY.**—Simplicity is that rectitude of soul which forbids a too anxious attention to ourselves and our own actions. This amiable virtue is very different from sincerity, and far excels it; for we often see very sincere persons who are devoid of simplicity. They would not pass, indeed, but for what they are, but they are continually apprehensive of appearing to be what they are not. The child of simplicity affects neither virtue nor truth; and is ever inattentive to that self of which the generality are so jealous.—*Fénélon*.